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LISA MARSHALL: What is your definition of leadership?

TERRY PETRZELKA: Leadership is caring, sharing & preparing, or integrity, results & caring. The ability to demonstrate and fulfill that what you're involved with and care about is demonstrated in how you act daily, how you treat people. I don't want to focus on the bottom line; I want to know how it will affect the people that have to deal with it. I want to create an organization that says people are the most important thing in that organization, and treat people as well as you do at home.

Leadership means you honor your commitments, hold yourself responsible. Delegation only means you're sharing the responsibility, not giving it away. How you maintain and conduct yourself, your work habits, how you treat people (which should be like they are all your cousins). People will do what you do, so you can't be hypocritical. You have to cherish your customers and your new people as you tell your stories, how you've grown and learned - with employees, customers. That builds business integrity, organizational integrity. It's self correcting. Integrity is hard, you never get it perfect. You learn from others, create honest and open relationships.

Caring & sharing are different stages of development, either for people or organizations. Preparing means thinking where do you want to be, uncovering the ghosts, the beasts before they become ghosts; it gets you better set for the future. Sharing grows the organization, grows the customer relationship. That's the journey, that caring, sharing, preparing. If you've done it right, then others can carry it on when you're gone. People can come and go, the process is true blue. It sustains the rest over time, through a common language and common behaviors that sustain. Scary is when you start a new company and don't have that in place; you better focus on that.

LM: How have your leadership gifts changed over time?

TP: What's changed over time is my ability to talk more openly and freely about my feelings. I realized that people felt you were real, not an empty suit when you did that. You're more believable. Started in my 30's...or maybe I've always been that way. It's a natural trait, not being embarrassed by it.

LM: When do you know you've received the call to leadership?

TP: Is it a calling? It's a way of thinking, a philosophy of doing it with others versus just doing it yourself. Every day, everyone wants to wake up and make a positive impact on something. It's that idea; that you can make something good happen. It's not self-serving. At the beginning, you may be questioned. You have to earn the respect. I've never taken the low road; my dad always taught me that what goes around comes around. The people who deviate from that, it becomes self evident.

Having a positive impact means that I've done something that made someone feel good. It doesn't have to be aesthetically pleasing; it has to be relationship pleasing. I want people to like me, I realize that. But there is a difference between using people and positively impacting them so that they're stretched and encouraged and doing better in line with what the bigger calling is. My artistry is with people, orchestrating them.

LM: How do you recognize the call?

TP: After a period of time, you see the people who aren't afraid to get up and make a mistake. It takes time to assess it. You recognize that inner confidence, that willingness to look like a jackass in service of getting something done. I never wanted my family to have to live with embarrassment that I have caused, and I feel the same way about the work place. It's people who make the hard decisions, who recognize their mission and follow through on it.

The worry is setting expectations too high, which can speed up the process, but has risks. What are the fundamentals, what's the decision we have to make, how is that important? When people see you do that consistently, follow that fundamental logic tree. Its consistency, in a good way, it follows the guiding principles. This all takes time to build, it's not class 101, it's more like 303.

LM: How do you know the call has been answered?

TP: It's never answered. If it is, then there's no reason to exist. As you go through life, the Call expands; by living it you immediately start inheriting more accountability and responsibility. Commitment reinforces commitment. There *is* a point where you get tired out, but it doesn't mean the Call ends, just that others have more energy to keep it going. Poor Moses, you do get tired of walking.

As long as you haven't changed the Calling and the method of the Calling, it stays alive. The torch is still there, but someone else may be carrying it. The pilot light is always on. Is the right person there? As long as it's moving, hasn't turned inward or self-serving, then yes. If the call is correct, then it should be self-correcting; the following will live the calling and the leadership can change.

LM: what do you as a leader need from others in order to be effective? What roles do you need them to play?

TP: I need a group of individuals to operationalize the guiding principles in a way that puts a method of behavior into the organization that turn those guiding principles into the vehicle that takes us down the road. You need the one who looks at the ghosts, the beasts. You need someone to do that for the internal and someone for the external, and they're usually not the same. I don't see that stuff. I need the dark side of people, someone who causes you to bounce between the bandwidth, challenges how broad or narrow it should be. Sometimes it's the financial people or the COO, testing between the reality and the vision.

You need the dreamers, the people who can enhance the vision, make it more robust and real. I need the rainmakers, hopefully they don't make a tornado. You need a caretaker, someone people can talk to and trust. And you might need a brakeman; someone who, when you haven't listened to the dark side, they're willing to just hit the brakes.

LM: Describe your own leadership journey?

TP: I learned at the Air Force Academy that the way I treated people meant that people would listen to and follow me. Early on, it was struggling between the dark side and the good side. Fighting with success, how it affects your thinking, you value system. Positive impact as a concept wasn't always forefront at all times. As the kids started getting older, I saw that people were watching what you did, at work. My wife forced me to focus on the family, not just myself.

I was at Control Data, realizing 1000+ people were looking to me to set an example; the other leaders weren't being who I wanted to be. So I came to Scitor; it offered a new beginning, a small company, and I felt we could do it better. It wasn't inward focused or self focused, but how do we become better than anybody dreamed it could be? I saw that we could learn from each other, improve the journey. The business results were good, the people by-products, were an order of magnitude better.

LM: What is the destination?

TP: I see myself becoming more of a mentor, guiding, putting the philosophy in place to run things, get a new business started, have an impact in starting the company, become the example. The pride of doing that is the pride of everybody who made it happen. Constant refinement; as the expanse of the venture expands, the fidelity of how you do it improves; that constant learning. Expanded knowledge base improves ability to execute.

LM: What gets in the way of your leadership?

TP: At times, maybe my personality. Instead of allowing things to take their natural course, if you're trying to make things happen and also provide opportunities for people to gain confidence so they'll do things themselves, you may become too dominant or controlling. Your own sense of

urgency may get in the way of the natural course; fail to allow buy-in. The sense of urgency may prevent them from feeling like it's theirs instead of yours. You may get a good result, but how you got there isn't the best. A couple too many of those kinds of experiences could get in the way of people listening to, following you. You're not listening, trying to guide, understand fully. I know I get myself into those at times. In my vision of the way to make things happen, that's not the way to do it. So, my personality gets in the way, caused by what's happening that day, my sense of urgency. "I don't have the time to wait," so you step in and push.

Leaders need to know when to push the accelerator pedal down and when not to. I don't like leaving things open, that's my personality. The bull in the china shop – knocks over stuff and accomplishes stuff both. Maybe maturity causes you to improve, or at least realize that the end result might not be worth the means you took. The maturing of your inner fabric includes going from materialistic things to non-materialistic things. Not that they go away, but they're not the highest priority. When you're younger, material things and proving yourself are important. Some of those things are things I wish I could retrace and redo, even though there were good results. There was damage along the way.

LM: What are the dilemmas that cause you the greatest concern?

TP: There's a Catch 22 in some of this stuff. As you're trying to mentor, nurture, help people succeed, people at times may feel like they're being manipulated, being used. It's the issue of how much you do to set the conditions so that someone can succeed. That's a tough problem. It can backfire. There's a dilemma of knowing when you have to step in and take control. That's a tough decision when you have to do that. Someone who may have been driving it, you have to go in and shove it along; that's tough.

Another dilemma is I always believe in 2nd chances; I've had many in my life. The dilemma is when the 2nd chance is used up and you still believe there's value in that person, and you have to bring it to an end. That's tough. I believe leaders are more service-oriented in trying to help people. I always see the good side, even when people disappoint the hell out of me. I struggle when people have great values and their performance requires letting them go. If it's the other way around, it's simple. There may not be 2nd chances on values. There's the dilemma of leaders who have trouble in their personal lives. So you're trying to strike a balance between your personal drives and your professional drives. Sometimes the responsibility to the organization conflicts and complicates your personal life. Fortunately, my wife will push back. The successful ones come home and sometimes reverse roles. To me that's the trait of a leader, that they can play all those roles.

LM: What have been your most transformational experiences as a leader?

TP: I know I got changed over a weekend when I went from a small town in Nebraska to the Academy. Not changed as an individual, but enlightened from a perspective point of view. As long as you're well grounded in your values, it allows the view from the new set of glasses to be a realization that you can accept.

Another changing moment may have been in my first real job, understanding that you could drive something and people will follow. The position allowed it to happen, and it turned into a powerful team that had a reputation for getting things done. I was still trying to make my mark, it was more of a warring situation, so there wasn't much cooperation or collaboration then. I went from there into sales, and that continued. I began to see that people's reactions were not of respect, but of jealousy. It was cumulative. I didn't like it when other people did it to me. You wonder why they're acting that way, and it hurts. You begin to realize you can't control everything, and you have to get buy-in.

In 1988, when I left CD (2000 people, sales of \$2B) and went to Scitor was another change moment. I saw that if I stayed, I would have to continue behavior I didn't like. I wanted to start new with a new set of behaviors. From then on, it was more of taking things you thought and put them into practice, constant vigilance around the values and culture that allowed natural leadership.

The last one was leaving Scitor for Tectura, my current company. I couldn't see all those people being let go. When I talked to people and they said "if you're here, we'll stay and it will work." I felt I owed it to them, since it had been my idea. My job is to grow it, consistent with why people stayed. I think its happening, the leadership is developing. People are changing. The tough times did make us stronger. You've got to be vigilant; we call people on behaviors, talk about what's right and what isn't. We need to have a national presence.

LM: What do you understand about leadership now that you didn't five or ten years ago?

TP: You don't have to worry about yourself that much. At the beginning leadership is ego driven. In my case, it was. Even ten years ago. When I took over Scitor, I thought I could run it better; I had a better feeling of what the people there were looking for, which was a place where the words and the actions would be consistent, even behind the scenes. As the organization grew, the ability to self-correct made us strong.

Five years ago, I realized that the strongest part of my personality is the caring side of me. A lot of my earlier life, I had been in conflict with myself because I was so results-driven. I'm still results-driven, but with a lot of caring wrapped around it, which allows results to happen quickly and is more rewarding to everybody.

LM: How have you evolved or changed over time? How haven't you?

TP: My wife would say too slowly.

I haven't in that I'm still working on the dilemmas. They're still there, they're still real. I work to use more and more of my experience to make those things easier to deal with, learn to deal with those. My maturity is putting that caring into the results you're trying to get. That's the most substantial thing over the last ten years, since '88 really. The means you used that negatively impacted people; now we talked about positively impacting our customers, our employees, our partners. That's a good judge, a good barometer. That wasn't always there in me. It used to be

that the ends more justified the means.

LM: What else should we have talked about?

TP: Why are you doing this? Why do people lead? I thought about it on the airplane after we talked last time. Everything we do is a way to create opportunities for people to accomplish things they didn't know they could do. To encourage people to take that step they were afraid to take. You want to succeed, you want to make your life better at the start, and then you start to want to do it at orders of magnitude with the people around you. That's a really rewarding and exciting experience.